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Town of Wenham
Massachusetts

Public Exercises

In Connection With

The Dedication

Of The

Peters' Hill Memorial

At Wenham Lake

October 25, 1908

Together With The

Report of the Memorial Committee

And an Appendix

Containing

Items of Historical Interest

Town of Wenham,
Massachusetts.

With the Compliments of the
Peters' Hill Memorial Committee.

Town of Wenham,

Massachusetts

Sunday Afternoon, October 25, 1908

HUGH PETERS
Born 1599 Died 1660

Order of Exercises

In connection with the Unveiling

of the

Memorial Tablet

Erected by the Town near the Site of "Peters' Hill"

In Commemoration of the

First Preaching of the Gospel in Wenham, by the Reverend Hugh Peters, Pastor of the Church in Salem, 1636-1641

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Order of Service

At Wenham Lake 2 o'clock

Hymn AMERICA

My country! 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died!
Land of the pilgrims' pride!
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring!

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills:
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song:
Let mortal tongues awake;
Let all that breathe partake;
Let rocks their silence break,-
The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God! to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing:
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King!

Invocation Rev. Abner D. Gorham

Responsive Reading Rev. Edwin A. Blake, Ph. D.

Minister. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.

People. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

Minister. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

People. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

Minister. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.

People. And He led them forth by a right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

Minister. O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!

People. For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Minister. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.

People. And there He maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;

Minister. And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

People. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

Minister. Again, they are diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

People He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.

Minister. Yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

People. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop his mouth.

Minister. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

People. Praise ye the Lord."

Report of Committee on Memorial

Unveiling of the Tablet

At the Congregational Church 2.30 o'clock

Organ Prelude

Hymn TUNE HEBER

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Jesus! my Shepherd, Guardian, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King!
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End!
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought:
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath:
And may the music of Thy name
Refresh my soul in death.

Scripture Reading Rev. Peter H. Goldsmith, D. D.
Pastor of the First Church in Salem

Prayer Rev. Frank Parker

Response "The Good Shepherd" *Van de Water*
Miss Mary Ervin Quinby

Hymn TUNE CAMBRIDGE

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of Thy throne,
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night,
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come!
Be Thou our guard, while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

Sermon (Text: II. Timothy 4 : 2)

Rev. Walter Samuel Eaton, Ph. D.
Pastor of the Congregational Church in Wenham

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Benediction Rev. Abner D. Gorham

Organ Postlude

Committee on Memorial

Wellington Pool, Chairman
Herbert W. Porter
Benjamin H. Conant
Arthur D. Prince, Secretary
Nathaniel P. Perkins
George E. Norris

THIS STONE MARKS THE SITE OF
PETERS HILL
ON WHICH ABOUT THE YEAR 1636
REVEREND HUGH PETERS
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN SALEM
PREACHED THE FIRST SERMON IN
WENHAM.
THUS EARLY IN THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN
WAS THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMED
ERECTED BY THE TOWN
1908

The Congregational Church, Wenham, Mass.

The Congregational Church in Wenham was organized Oct. 8, 1644, with Rev. John Fisk, who had removed from Salem to Wenham in 1641, as pastor. In 1655 Mr. Fisk with a portion of the church went away, and with people from other places settled at Chelmsford. Immediate steps were taken by the town even before their departure, for the continuance of the church here. The second pastor, Rev. Antipas Newman, began his work here in 1657 though he was not formally installed until 1663. The following is a complete list of pastors of the church to the present time.

John Fisk,	1644-1655	John S. Sewall, D. D.	1859-1867
Antipas Newman,	1657-1672	Alexander C. Childs,	1867-1868
Joseph Gerrish,	1674-1720	William R. Joyslin,	1868-1870
Robert Ward,	1721-1732	Will C. Wood,	1870-1876
John Warren,	1733-1749	Samuel W. Clarke,	1877-1878
Joseph Swain,	1750-1792	John M. Hart,	1878-1879
Adoniram Judson,	1792-1799	James H. Childs,	1880-1884
Rufus Anderson,	1805-1814	John C. Mitchell,	1884-1886
John Smith, D. D.,	1817-1819	George M. Woodwell,	1887-1890
Ebenezer P. Sperry,	1820-1837	Arthur N. Ward,	1891-1898
Daniel Mansfield,	1837-1847	Morris H. Turk, Ph.D.	1898-1903
Jeremiah Taylor, D.D.	1847-1856	Walter S. Eaton, Ph.D.	1904-

The following account of the early meeting houses in Wenham was prepared by the memorial committee after a careful examination of the town records.

The town records of Wenham indicate that there was a meeting-house here as early as 1642, though just when it was built or where it stood does not appear. It is generally supposed to have been situated somewhere within a quarter of a mile south of the present church building. It appears to have been in use until 1663, when a new meeting-house twenty four feet square and twelve feet stud was built. As nearly as can now be determined, this second house stood on or near the western end of the enclosure now known as the park. In 1688 a third meeting-house appears to have been built on the eastern end of the park, which stood until 1748, when it was taken down and a fourth house erected upon the same spot. This building was used as a house of worship for ninety-five years, or until 1843 when the fifth or present church edifice was erected a few rods north of the old meeting-house. The old house was then sold to the Ice Company and removed to the lake, where it was used as an ice house until it was destroyed in the great fire of 1873.

A SERMON

Delivered by

Reverend Walter Samuel Eaton, Ph. D.,

Minister of the Wenham Congregational Church.

PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

"Preach the word" 2 Timothy, 4:2.

This is a short text but a difficult task to perform. Paul, who gave this command to Timothy, knew by experience how hard his young friend's work would be. The great Apostle to the Gentiles did not ask Timothy to do what he was not willing to do himself. At that time Paul understood better than Timothy what a great responsibility he had placed upon him, and with what dangers he would be threatened if he were true to his trust. Jesus did not call His apostles to a life of ease. On the contrary, He told them that they would be arrested and brought before governors and kings: that they would be scourged in the synagogues and hated of all men.

Though the task of preaching the Gospel has always been a dangerous and a difficult one from the days of the Apostles to the present time, yet Jesus has never been left without witnesses. He has ever had a faithful and loyal company of followers who have had the martyr-spirit; who feared nothing but cowardice; who possessed heroic qualities; and who took pleasure in dying

for the Gospel which they had been permitted to preach. When threatened with bodily harm, unjustly and falsely accused, imprisoned and condemned to die, many of the Master's disciples, during the past nineteen hundred years, have been as unmoved and as fearless as was Paul, who, knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him in Jerusalem where he was going, said:- "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20: 24).

It is a matter of interest that the first authentic record we have of this town is in connection with the preaching of the Gospel. At the very beginning of the life of this township the Word of God was preached in it.

It is a matter of congratulation, also, to the citizens of this place that the Reverend Hugh Peters preached the first sermon that was ever delivered within the bounds of Wenham. The place was on a little hill near our beautiful lake. The text was taken from the Gospel according to John, the third chapter and a part of the twenty-third verse,- "In Aenon near to Salim because there was much water there." The sermon, so far as I know, has not been preserved. What the preacher said on that occasion can only be imagined. But we need not hesitate to believe that the sermon was designed to do only good. The audience! Was it large or small? Where did the people come from? Who were in the congregation? Were they all saints? Did any attend that service out of mere curiosity to see and to hear a distinguished minister? History does not answer these questions, and many more of a like character which naturally suggest themselves to our minds.

About two hundred and seventy years ago this historic sermon was preached. That was six years before the organization of this church; twelve years after the founding of Salem; eighteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth; and twenty-four years after Captain John Smith coasted along the rocky shores of New England which he named and recommended to the wealthy and well-to-do people of Old England. The year that Hugh Peters preached in Wenham, Oliver Cromwell was devoting himself assiduously to the pursuit of farming; Charles the First, though very unpopular with many in his realm, was still on the throne; John

Eliot was preaching to the Indians and translating for them portions of the Word of God; Anne Hutchinson, a member of the First Church in Salem, and a remarkable woman, was holding meetings for women, criticising the doctrines that were preached by Dr. John Cotton, and paving the way for her banishment from the colony; pirates were committing crimes on the sea everywhere; and negroes were brought from Africa to Salem. Then the country was new; the winters severe; comforts scanty; houses rude; provisions often few; work plenty; and problems many. But the Pilgrim and Puritan fathers were possessed of qualities that were needed in grappling with great problems, in overcoming obstacles, and in laying the foundations for a great republic.

No man in those times possessed such qualities in a greater degree than did the man who preached the first sermon that was ever heard within the limits of Wenham. He was no ordinary character. He was a rare spirit, a picked man, a choice soul. He was well-born. There was good blood in his veins. His ancestor was an officer in the army of William the Conqueror. His father was a well-to-do merchant, living at Foy in Cornwall where Hugh Peters was born in the year 1599.

In that prosperous home there were at one time three sons, William, Thomas and Hugh, and all of whom received a university education, and all became men of note.

William, who was graduated at Leyden, Holland, became a prosperous merchant in New England. He purchased the whole site of the City of Boston but was not allowed by the new comers to hold his purchase. He died at Andover where he owned considerable property.

Thomas, who was educated at Oxford, became the minister at Saybrook, Connecticut.

Hugh, the youngest son of that illustrious family, was graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, and became a successful preacher, a fearless patriot, and a wise philanthropist.

According to the statement of Hugh Peters, it was the preaching of the Word that influenced him to become a Christian. How many the world over could give a similar testimony! How many have been helped heavenward, upward and Godward by the preaching of the Gospel! The faithful preaching of the Word of God, is and always has been, a mighty power for good in the

world and as long as sin continues to exist in the hearts of men; as long as there is injustice, enmity and oppression in society; and as long as there is war, unrighteousness and unholy living on earth; so long will there be need of preachers and preaching.

Hugh Peters had at least three pastorates,- St. Sepulchers, London; Rotterdam, Holland, and Salem, Massachusetts. In these pastorates he was very successful. At St. Sepulchers his popularity occasioned envy and danger. Here he had an audience from six to seven thousand. And here "above an hundred every week were persuaded from sin to Christ." At Rotterdam, where he remained as a colleague with Dr. Ames for seven years, "the presence of God" was in his work. That Hugh Peters had great influence in Holland, and that he was held in high esteem in the country to which he was once banished by Archbishop Laud for non-conformity, is evidenced by the fact, that at one time, after his return to England from Salem, he collected from Holland 30,000 pounds or $150,000 for the Protestant sufferers in Ireland.

The first church in Salem where Hugh Peters preached for about five years greatly increased under his ministry. His ability as a preacher was recognized even by one of his most bitter enemies, William Young, M. D., who swore away his life. Dr. Young says, - "Mr. Peters was a popular preacher, admired by all the classical preachers of New England, Holland and Germany. And the Huguenots of England were so bewitched with his doctrines, eloquence and fervent prayers, that they sighed at the loss of such a precious villian." Some fragments of his sermons and other writings which I have had the opportunity of reading bear the marks of an original thinker, a scholarly mind, a strong character and a fearless preacher.

Let me quote two or three of his sentences.

"How few pray! How many say words! Oh, how many say their prayers backwards. Call him Father, who is not their Father, would not have His name hallowed, nor His kingdom come."

"The busie-body is but a Pedlar to carry up and down, and vend the Devil's wares."

"Fair Dove-Coats have most pigeons; Lost Estates have no Friends."

"A well led life is the best monument."

Hugh Peters recognized what perhaps some of us have not, that he was a man before he became a minister and when he became a minister he did not expatriate himself. He believed that his duties were not entirely confined to his pulpit ministrations.

He was a public spirited man. He was greatly interested in the welfare of New England, and at the close of his earthly life he expressed regret that he had not remained in this country which he called his "home."

During his pastorate in the First church of Salem, he became interested in reforming the police system; encouraged commerce; advised the planting of hemp; worked in the interest of fishermen and was the means of establishing a store in which the necessaries for fishing might be bought for reasonable prices. He had a hand in trying to remedy many wrongs, such as oppression in wages, excessive prices for commodities, smith work and teaming.

Hugh Peters took an interest in the cause of education, and he was one of the founders of Harvard college.

It would be impossible to estimate the value and extent of the services which he rendered New England. John Winthrop calls him "a man of very public spirit and singular activity for all occasions," and he adds that he "went from place to place laboring both publicly and privately to raise up men to a better frame of spirit."

Hugh Peters was sent in 1641 by the Massachusetts Colony to England to plead for a decrease of taxes, and through his efforts New England was relieved from all duties on exports and imports to and from the mother country, which were for the home consumption of the colonists.

Soon after Hugh Peters arrived in England he identified himself with the Parliamentary cause, which he firmly believed to be right, and served it faithfully as chaplain, officer, and war correspondent. He not only preached to the soldiers of Cromwell's army, but also visited the sick and wounded and ministered to them like a brother. After the death of Oliver Cromwell, Hugh Peters did not take an active part in public affairs. This was doubtless due to the fact that he was greatly broken in health and spirit.

After the overthrow of Richard Cromwell and the restoration of Charles the Second to the throne of England, Hugh Peters was ordered by the Council of State to be apprehended.

Hundreds of pamphlets, ballads and cartoons appeared against him. He was arrested and committed to the Tower. After his unfair and unjust trial for high treason; after his conviction without even being allowed counsel, and by a jury that was prejudiced against him, having one member who was the star witness for the prosecution, and who swore away his life, this minister on October 16th, 1660, was taken from the Tower to Charing Cross, where, after being compelled to witness the death of John Coke who was hanged by the neck and then cut down alive; whose bowels were taken out and burned; whose head was severed from his body; whose body was cut into four parts for permanent exhibition in as many places; and whose head was set upon a pole at the North end of Westminster Hall—after being compelled to witness such a ghastly sight, Hugh Peters was executed in the same barbarous manner and his head exhibited to the curious on London Bridge.

A man, tall and thin, active and sprightly, with high forehead and penetrating eyes which were well apart from each other, indicating honesty and strength of character; ready and original in speech; simple in his manner of living; broad-minded and catholic in spirit; loyal to his friends and magnanimous towards his enemies; generous with his gifts; thoughtful of others; interested in the highest welfare of his fellowmen; always a gentlemen; a man whose character was above reproach; whose life was ever devoted to noble ends, and whose triumphant and glorious death witnessed to his unswerving confidence in Jesus Christ to Whom, with a smiling countenance, as he was about to yield to the stroke of death, he prayed,-"I come to thee upon the wings of faith. Lord Jesus receive me with grace into the joy of my Lord. Amen." Such, in brief, was the man who preached the first sermon that was ever delivered in Wenham.

But our interest to-day centers not only in a distinguished preacher but also in preaching: not only in a great minister, but also in a great message.

We meet on this occasion to congratulate ourselves that since the day Hugh Peters, standing upon a little hill, within sight of yonder beautiful lake, spoke the words of life to earnest listeners, until this very day the Gospel has been preached within the bounds of this township.

It is a matter of congratulation also that the pastors of this old

and historic church, from Rev. John Fiske, its first minister, to Rev. Dr. Morris H. Turk, my immediate predecessor, were for the most part, men of learning and piety.

John Fiske, a graduate of Immanual College, Cambridge, England; Joseph Gerrish, Robert Ward and John Warren, graduates of Harvard College: Adoniram Judson, a graduate of Brown; Rufus Anderson, a graduate of Dartmouth; Daniel Mansfield, a graduate of Amherst; John Smith Sewall, a graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary; Will Converse Wood, a graduate of Harvard and Andover and Morris H. Turk, a college graduate, an alumnus of the Theological Department of Boston University and also of its school of All Sciences:-these are the names of some of the pastors of this church, and the value of their services to this town and to the world is known only to God.

It was one of these scholarly and public-spirited men, (Jeremiah Taylor) who caused to be planted on both sides of our Main Street those beautiful trees which are so greatly admired and which add so much to the attractiveness of our village as well as comfort to beast and man. But it is also a matter of congratulation that the pastors of the other church located within the bounds of Wenham from the Reverend Charles Miller, its first minister, to the Reverend Frank Parker, its present incumbent, have been and are men of sterling worth, high ideals, unselfish motives, and faithful preachers of the Gospel.

All honor to that splendid company of men to whom I have just referred, and who have done not a little to make Wenham a desirable and a respectable place in which to live; who have done much to make it easy for people to do right and difficult to do wrong; and without whom and the Gospel which they proclaimed, Wenham would only be fit for the devil's cast-aways.

What has the preaching of the Gospel meant to this town since Hugh Peters came to tell its people the story of the Cross? Has it meant nothing to the people of Wenham that the pastors of these two local churches were men of liberal education, broad culture and deep piety?

Was it nothing to this community that the first minister of this church was not only a faithful preacher of the Gospel, but also a teacher of great learning and recognized ability and a skillful physician?

Physicians in those days were not as numerous as they are now. How much John Fiske did for the sick in this parish we do not know. But we have every reason to believe that he gladly responded to every call for medical aid.

What a valuable member of this community that man must have been! Fortunate were the people in those days to have had in their midst such a minister– a man of such varied accomplishments– a man who could preach, teach and practise medicine!

If there is general agreement among us today that the minister two hundred and fifty years ago was a needed and useful member of society, what shall we say about the community's need of the minister now?

Are preachers and preaching still essential to the highest welfare of mankind?

Have we arrived at that point in the progress of the race where the preaching of the Gospel can be dispensed with? Has the work of the minister been supplanted by the public press, by general education, by modern systems of ethics and philosophy, and by a so-called science which is neither scientific nor christian?

Has the Gospel outlived its usefulness?

That man-made creeds, over which our fathers so often quarrelled; that dogmas to which men clung with great tenacity; that irrational and unscriptural beliefs which were once held by sincere but misguided men; that false conceptions of God, of His relation to us and His plan for the human race, have become obsolete and out of date, I readily admit. But the Gospel —the good news which Jesus, more than nineteen hundred years ago, brought to earth, that God is with men and that His kingdom is at hand— is such a Gospel no longer needed?

Ask that aged man of great wealth whose only interests now are found within the walls of his sick-chamber!

Ask that mother whose wayward and wicked son has plucked from her countenance every beautiful rose of happiness, and has broken her heart!

Ask that poor widow who has been left with a family of little children to support and whose life is one of drudgery and care!

Ask that man, over whom an avalanch of trouble and sorrow has rolled; whose property has been swept away like the dew before the sun; and who feels that the very light of his life has gone

out and that never again will he behold the sunshine of God's love and favor! Ask those who feel the burdening sense of guilt!

Ask the honest doubter! Ask yourself! And then tell me if you conscientiously can, that the Gospel is antiquated, obsolete and out of date.

I most devoutly believe that the Gospel. which was preached by the Apostles, is not only needed in these days, but also, that it is "the only good news worth the telling."

Dr. Jefferson has recently pointed out in an article published by "The Congregationalist" that bad news nowadays are industriously spread abroad.

"Murders, embezzlements, defalcations, divorce suits, scandals and railroad wrecks - all this is spread abroad by men organized for the purpose and who do their work with the fervor of prophets and the industry of apostles."

Surely to-day there are enough people who are employed in publishing bad news.

Those who are engaged in publishing the good news are none too many. If now the preaching of the Gospel, the publishing of good news that God is in this world, and that His kingdom is at hand, is an essential factor in the life and welfare of the community, then I submit that its inhabitants should support it more universally and more generously than they usually do. If we are in any sense indebted to Hugh Peters and to other men who preached the Gospel within the bounds of this township, let it not be forgotten that the people of to-day have some obligations to the men in this age who are learned, eloquent and faithful preachers of the Word of God. We need not apologize to-day for those splendid men who preached the Gospel in Wenham in days gone by.

And neither is there any occassion for apologizing for the ministers, as a whole, who are today the very salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Never since the days of the Apostles were the ministers of Christ more learned, scholarly and catholic; more loyal to their Master; more consecrated to their work and more self-sacrificing than now.

With all of my acquaintance with Christian ministers, in more than one denomination, during the past forty years, I have never

known of one who refused to respond to any reasonable call for help and service.

Let the unthinking and ungodly man slander the good name of the minister, and the great-hearted, generous and forgiving minister will be the very first to help his enemy when misfortune and sorrow overtake him.

Today ministers preach the Gospel, not only when they stand behind the sacred desk on the holy Sabbath, but also when they visit the sick, pray with the dying, bury the dead and comfort the mourning.

The duties of the modern minister are not a few; his problems are often perplexing; his hours of labor are long; his work is hard; the demands upon his time are many; and his strength of body, mind and soul is taxed to the very utmost.

"'Tis not a cause of small import,
The pastor's care demands,
But what might fill an angel's head
And filled a Savior's hands."

Why do I speak thus of the Christian pastors today? Because our young men, in so few numbers are entering the ministry, and because there will be no preaching of the Gospel when there are no preachers.

Sad will be the day when the doors of the churches are closed: when there are no ministers in the communities; and when the Gospel is not preached.

Any man who helps to close the doors of the christian church, who hinders the preaching of the Gospel, and who, in any way, prevents the christian minister from spreading abroad the good news of help in God and salvation in Jesus, is a very undesirable citizen and an enemy to the progress and welfare of the community.

I plead then today for the modern minister:- not for money but for mercy; not for compliments but for compassion; not for comforts but for charity.

I plead to-day for the modern minister:- not that you should have a deeper sense of appreciation of his value and worth in the community, but that you may make it possible for him to preach the Gospel, to tell the good news with his lips, hands, feet and life.

and to hand down to your children and to mine and to coming generations a legacy of priceless value,- a knowledge of the love of God, unswerving faith in His eternal justice and goodness, and the glad tidings of the Lordship and companionship of Jesus who is, and always will be, the Gospel, the good news.

"O that the world would taste and see
The riches of His grace!
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace.

His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim:
'Tis all my business here below,
To cry, "Behold the Lamb!"

Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
"Behold, behold the Lamb!"

DEDICATION

OF THE

PETERS' HILL MEMORIAL

AT

WENHAM LAKE

Sunday, October 25, 1908, was an eventful day in the quiet town of Wenham, and the memory of it will long linger in the minds of both citizens and visitors who were present at the dedicatory services at Wenham Lake, and in the Congregational Church. The weather conditions at the time were very favorable, it being one of those calm, quiet days which occasionally occur in the late autumn, with the sky slightly overcast, and a soft, balmy air; an ideal day for an out-of-doors gathering.

By the courtesy of the Boston and Northern Street Railway Company, free transportation from the village by special cars, was furnished for all who desired to attend the exercises at the Lake, and at the appointed hour quite a large company had gathered to witness and to participate in the exercises of the day.

From 1638 to 1908 seemed but a step, at least to some of the throng, as by the quiet lake side the voice of prayer and praise ascended as it did when the Reverend Hugh Peters first preached the Gospel to the early settlers.

At a few minutes past two o'clock, Mr. Arthur D. Prince,

secretary of the Memorial Committee, called the assembly to order, and invited all present to join in singing the National hymn :

My Country, 'tis of thee
Sweet land of liberty
Of thee I sing.

At the conclusion of the singing, the divine blessing upon the exercises of the day was invoked by Rev. Abner D. Gorham, who has spent the greater part of his life in this place, and who was for twenty-nine years, (1863-1892,) pastor of the Baptist church at Wenham Neck.

Following the invocation, the responsive reading of the scriptures, as printed in the Order of Service, was conducted by Rev. Edwin A. Blake, Ph. D., pastor of the People's Union Church in South Hamilton, the congregation joining heartily in the exercise.

Extracts from the following report of the Memorial Committee were next read by Mr. Wellington Pool, Chairman of the Committee.

Report of the Memorial Committee.

We have met here to-day to dedicate a Memorial Bowlder and Tablet, commemorating the first preaching of the gospel in Wenham, about two hundred and seventy years ago, by the Reverend Hugh Peters, then pastor of the church in Salem.

In that early period, the feet of Hugh Peters, the eloquent preacher of St. Sepulchre's in London, pressed the ground whereon we now stand, and, choosing for his pulpit a small conical hill which sloped to the margin of the lake, he preached from John III : 23, "In Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." By that service, Hugh Peters in an especial manner consecrated this spot to the worship of Almighty God ; and we to-day in dedicating this memorial re-consecrate it anew to the same high purpose. (See Appendix, Note A.)

Passing now over nearly two centuries, we find that in the year 1835, the question of erecting some memorial of that event in the early history of the town was being considered by the inhabitants, for, at the annual town meeting in that year, it was "Voted ;–to relinquish the privilege the town has in Peters' Hill to the First Parish in Salem, for the purpose of erecting a monument to the

memory of their distinguished divine, Hugh Peters, on condition that the said First Parish in Salem build, or cause to be built, or erected, a monument on the said Peters' Hill within three years from this day, March 3, 1835, otherwise, the said First Parish have no privilege to build on said hill."

By some means, the First Parish in Salem failed to avail itself of the privilege thus freely granted, and the next mention of Peters' Hill on the town records is in 1843, when Mr. Charles B. Lander of Danvers, having recently erected buildings for the storage of ice on land near by, was granted sufficient land adjacent to Peters' Hill for the construction of a railroad to connect his buildings with the main line of the Eastern Railroad. These buildings at first encroached but very little upon Peters' Hill, which was situated between them and the main highway. (See Appendix, Note B.) The first crop of ice was gathered during the winter of 1843-44. With the increase of the ice business, more land was required, and steps were soon taken by the Ice Company to secure Peters' Hill. The subject was brought up at the annual town meeting in March, 1844, when it was voted, not to sell Peters' Hill, twenty-two voting in the affirmative, and forty-two in the negative; but at an adjournment of this meeting held April 1, 1844, the vote not to sell the property was reconsidered, and it was then voted to sell the same, thirty-four in the affirmative, and twenty nine in the negative. Thus it will be seen, that, although there was considerable opposition to the sale, the utilitarian spirit finally prevailed, and Peters' Hill metaphorically speaking, was delivered into the hands of the Philistines.

In an article entitled, "Wenham Lake and the Ice Trade," by Rev. Alfred P. Putnam, D. D., of Danvers, published in a magazine called "Ice and Refrigeration," July, 1892, Dr. Putnam refers in a very interesting manner to the story of Peters' Hill, or "Peters' Pulpit" as it was frequently called. After a brief reference to the beginning of the ice business at this place, he continues as follows:

"On the northeastern margin of Wenham Lake once stood a small, grassy, conical hill which for more than two centuries has been regarded as an object of peculiar, sacred interest, for it was upon the summit of that little eminence, whence one could look down into pellucid depths below, and immediately around upon a

diversified and most enchanting scene of nature, that the celebrated Hugh Peters preached a famous sermon from the text, "In Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." John 3 : 23. The Wenham settlement was then called Enon : it was but a few miles from Salem itself, and it certainly had a bountiful supply of water." (See Appendix, Note C.) "A multitude came from all the surrounding region to hear the great preacher, then associated with Roger Williams in the pastorate of the church in Salem, as he eloquently proclaimed the word of God there under the open sky, and from that pulpit 'not made with hands.' Through years and generations numberless pilgrims had found their way thither and there tried to recall the picture as it presented itself in that early period ; at the same time they remembered the sad fate of the central object of interest as he returned to England, and for his conspicuous alliance with Cromwell and the Puritans was publicly executed in a most barbarous manner at Charing Cross in London in 1660, after the restoration of Charles II. The spot should have been held as consecrated ground forevermore, and a monument erected upon it to the memory of the man whose presence and word had so hallowed it, and by whose martyrdom had made it more holy still."

Referring to the sale of Peters' Hill, Dr. Putnam says : "there was some opposition to the sale, and about forty years ago, the late Edmund Kimball, Esq. of Wenham, told him how that he (Esquire Kimball) had then appeared before his assembled fellow citizens and pleaded with them with tears in his eyes, that they would spurn the paltry sum which had been offered as the price, and keep inviolate the consecrated mound." But it was all in vain. It was voted to sell it, and the deed conveying the property to Mr. Lander was dated April 11, 1844.

Dr. Putnam further states that during a recent conversation with the venerable George Wheatland, Esq., President of the Essex Institute at Salem, and formerly a member of the Ice Company, "Mr. Wheatland recalled with regret that he himself had ordered and superintended the work of demolition. And 'Enon, near to Salim' now regrets quite as much that she ever gave her consent. But she has since done the best she could under the circumstances, by adopting a town seal with the figure of a hillock in the centre.

beyond which is a view of the water and of the high banks opposite, forming a very neat and appropriate design."

As previously stated, several ice-houses had already been built on land adjoining Peters' Hill. The Ice Company had also purchased the old meeting-house of the Congregational Church, and removed it to the lake where it was placed by the side of the other buildings, and close to the westerly side of the hill. (See Appendix, Note D.) Soon after the hill had passed into the possession of the Ice Company, it was completely leveled, and other ice-houses were erected on the spot covering nearly its entire site, the old meeting house being the fifth in a series of ten large buildings. (See Appendix, Note E.) The ice-cutting business was carried on here every winter until on Sunday evening, Nov. 9, 1873, the entire plant was totally destroyed by the most spectacular fire which has ever occurred in Wenham. For a few years after the destruction of these buildings the Company continued its work here, stacking the ice in temporary buildings, but the business was finally all removed to other places. It now seems a great pity that, after the discontinuance of the ice business at this place, the town neglected to regain possession of this historic spot, and convert it into a park to be kept and maintained forever as a public reservation for the use and benefit of all the inhabitants, and there are those to-day who still entertain hopes that this may yet be accomplished.

The subject of erecting some memorial commemorating the first preaching of the gospel in Wenham has frequently been talked of in an informal manner by individuals interested in antiquarian matters, but the first movement to bring the subject before the town for consideration was made by Mr. Benjamin H. Conant in 1902. Mr. Conant, having occasion to appear before the Finance and Advisory Committee of the town in the interest of the public library, at that time expressed a desire that something might be done to mark the site of Peters' Hill during the lifetime of those then living who had personal recollections concerning its location and general appearance. He also, at the same time suggested that the ancient mile-stone in front of the cemetery ought to have some protection from possible injury from passing vehicles. (See Appendix, Note F.) Both of these suggestions received favorable consideration by the Finance and Advisory Committee, and an article embodying

them was inserted in the warrant for the annual town meeting of that year, (1902.) Under this article it was: Voted "1st, to instruct the Selectmen to protect the Old Mile-Stone in front of the cemetery by removal of the same to the cemetery wall, or, by placing a suitable curb on either side, and that the expense be charged to the town incidentals."

"2nd, Voted that the subject of marking the site of Peters' Hill be referred to Benjamin H. Conant and Wellington Pool, and that they be requested to confer with the officers of the Ladies' Village Improvement Society, and report at the next town meeting whether the site of Peters' Hill should be marked, and if so, how, and by whom, and, if by the town, at what estimated expense."

The first part of the above vote was carried into effect during the summer of 1902, while the cemetery wall was being relaid.

At the annual town meeting in 1903, Mr. Wellington Pool made a verbal report for the committee appointed the previous year to confer with the officers of the Village Improvement Society in relation to the Peters' Hill memorial, in which he stated that after several conferences with them, it was for good and sufficient reasons deemed best that the entire expense and management of erecting the memorial should be assumed by the town. In regard to the particular form or style of the memorial to be erected, it was the opinion of the committee that a bronze tablet, suitably inscribed and placed upon a large bowlder would be a very appropriate manner of marking this spot.

It was further reported that a bowlder of suitable size and shape for this purpose was situated upon an outcropping ledge within a short distance, upon land belonging to Dr. John C. Phillips, who is also the present owner of the site of Peters' Hill. Mr. Pool had had some correspondence with Dr. Phillips upon the subject with the result that liberty was freely granted to take this bowlder for the purpose indicated, and to remove it to the site of Peters' Hill, provided it could be moved without material damage to the land of said Phillips.

The report of the committee was accepted, and on recommendation of the Finance and Advisory Committee it was voted: "1st, That the sum of two hundred dollars be raised and appropriated for the removal of a bowlder on land of John C. Phillips to the site

of Peters' Hill, so called, and for the suitable grading of said site, and marking said bowlder in honor of Rev. Hugh Peters, who preached the first sermon in this town on that site."

"2nd, Voted; That the Board of Selectmen and citizens Wellington Pool and Benjamin H. Conant be a special committee to carry out this purpose."

Mr. George E. Norris was subsequently added to this committee.

During the next few years but little was accomplished except in a general way by interviews with the older citizens of the town, and by examinations of the ground in order to locate the boundaries of the hill as nearly as possible. In June, 1905, Prof. John H. Sears of the Peabody Academy of Science in Salem, made a critical examination of the bowlder, a report of which he later embodied in the following communication.

Peters' Hill Memorial.

The proposed Bowlder to mark the spot where Hugh Peters delivered the first sermon in the town of Wenham, Massachusetts.

This bowlder is a glacial erratic, that was removed from the original ledge of which it was a part, probably in West Andover, Massachusetts, or Pelham, New Hampshire, as there is no similar rock nearer than these places in the line of glaciation, which is everywhere in the region apparent by the scratched and striated surfaces of ledges. These scratches are invariably from the Northwest to the Southeast, and consequently, in this Northwest course the only ledges of this rock are in the places above named. The bowlder was without doubt imbedded in the bottom of the glacial Ice Cap which covered New England during the Glacial Period, and which was at least one thousand feet thick over Essex County. This bowlder probably produced some of the scratches and rounded surfaces of outcropping ledges, thus giving us a guide to trace its course from the parent ledge to its present resting place on the shore of Wenham Lake. This bowlder is well worthy of being preserved as a geological specimen, a relic of the work of the great Ice Age, its well rounded surfaces which show deep scratches, fine striae, and even polished areas due to its being moved overand across the bed-rock in its passage, is a marvel that has been preserved for our inspection and study, and that future generations

may see such a remarkable specimen.

There have been numbers of similar bowlders known to the writer in various parts of our county, that have been destroyed by being broken up to form material for stone walls, and thus lost for future study.

The rock, by measurements taken, shows that it contains approximately one hundred and ten cubic feet, and as this form of rock is known to have twelve cubic feet in a ton, the weight of it would exceed nine tons.

The composition of the bowlder is much quartz and feldspar, with horneblende and muscovite mica as essential minerals, also accessory minerals, garnet, biotite, magnetite and limonite, this last mineral giving the rock its reddish or pink color. The minerals are arranged in bands or layers, giving the bowlder a distinctly gneissic character. Thus the rock is what is popularly known as a foliated muscovite biotite granite.

June 17, 1905. Signed: J. H. Sears.

Towards the latter part of February, 1908, the bowlder was successfully removed from its original position to land belonging to the town near the exact site of Peters' Hill, and during the summer following a massive foundation of stone and cement some six feet in depth was constructed, upon which the bowlder was placed. A considerable quantity of material for properly grading the surrounding land was furnished gratuitously by the Street Railway Co., which was at that time engaged in relaying its track through the town.

The bowlder, having been duly placed in position, the committee next considered the preparation of an appropriate inscription for the tablet. The task of compressing the desired subject matter into the most concise form was found to be somewhat perplexing, and although several forms of inscriptions were submitted by members of the committee, no one of them appeared to be wholly satisfactory. The inscription finally accepted was written by Mrs. Walter S. Eaton, to which was subsequently added a sentence by Mr. Conant, and in this amended form was adopted by the unanimous vote of the committee. The inscription as amended reads as follows :–

"This Stone marks the site of Peters' Hill on which, about the year 1638, Reverend Hugh Peters, Pastor of the church in Salem, Preached the First Sermon in Wenham. Text from John III : 23, 'In Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there'."

"Thus early in the History of the Town was the Gospel proclaimed."

Erected by the Town, 1908.

The duty of procuring the tablet and of having it placed upon the bowlder was assigned by the committee to Mr. Pool, who, after making due investigations, awarded the contract for making the casting to the Albert Russell and Sons Co. of Newburyport, Mass.

The completed tablet of bronze, twenty four by thirty eight inches in size, was received by the committee September 23, and a few days later was placed upon the bowlder.

The memorial being now completed, arrangements for the dedicatory exercises were next in order. By the unanimous vote of the committee, Rev. Walter S. Eaton, Ph. D., pastor of the Congregational Church in Wenham, was invited to deliver the sermon on that occasion. It was also voted to invite the pastor of the First Church in Salem, as the successor of Hugh Peters, to take some part in the exercises. Messrs. Pool and Prince were appointed a sub-committee to consult with Dr. Eaton and arrange the further details of the programme.

Although the Peters' Hill memorial was designed and erected under the direct auspices of the town, it was, on account of its distinctly religious character, deemed eminently fitting that the dedicatory exercises should be held upon the sabbath. We are, therefore, on this beautiful Sunday afternoon, here assembled to consecrate and dedicate this memorial bowlder and tablet in commemoration of the fact that in the earliest history of our town, the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was freely proclaimed to all the inhabitants thereof.

Wellington Pool.
Benjamin H. Conant. } For the Committee.

Unveiling of the Tablet.

The next feature on the programme was the unveiling of the

tablet which until this time had been concealed beneath a large American flag which covered the entire bowlder. Miss Blanche Stanton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred P. Stanton, now stepped forward and released the fastenings, when, as if by its own volition, the flag arose and floated majestically over the scene, while a sigh of satisfaction went up from the waiting audience which had stood so reverently during the service, and many pressed forward to examine the tablet which until this time had been hidden from view.

The exercises at the lake being now concluded, special cars were in readiness to convey the people to the Congregational Church, where the remaining services were to be held.

The exercises at the church began with an Organ Prelude, Mr. Benjamin H. Conant, who for forty-five years has served as organist of the church, presiding.

The singing of the hymns by the congregation led by a large volunteer choir, and accompanied by the full organ was extremely inspiring. Rev. Peter H. Goldsmith, D. D., pastor of the First Church in Salem read selections from the scriptures in voice and manner befitting the occasion, and the prayer by Rev. Frank Parker, pastor of the Baptist Church at Wenham Neck, carried the worshippers to a higher plane as he voiced the thanks of the people for mercies past and petitions for the future welfare of Wenham.

Following the prayer, Miss Mary E. Quinby of Wenham, sang in a very acceptable manner "The Good Shepherd," a fine musical setting of the twenty-third Psalm.

The sermon by Rev. Dr. Eaton, (printed in full elsewhere in this pamphlet,) received the close attention of the congregation throughout its delivery.

After the singing of the doxology by the choir and congregation, the benediction was pronounced by Rev. Abner D. Gorham.

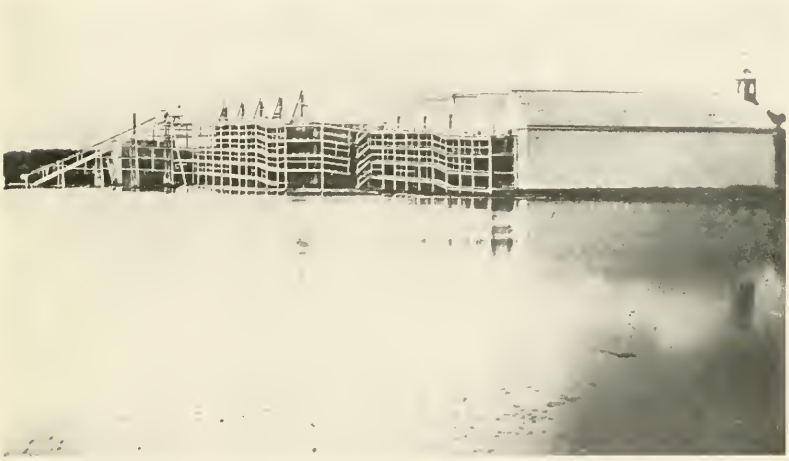
The entire service was ably presided over by Mr. Arthur D. Prince, Secretary of the Memorial Committee.

A large congregation including many friends from neighboring towns, was present at the service, at the close of which the committee received many congratulations upon the success of the undertaking.

Ice Houses at Wenham Lake.

On and adjacent to the site of Peters' Hill.

The Ice business was begun at this place in 1843 by Mr. Charles B. Lander of Danvers. After the first year or two, several other gentlemen became associated with Mr. Lander, and carried on the business under various titles until about 1850, when it was sold to Messrs. Gage, Hittenger & Co., of Boston. In 1859 the firm name was changed to Addison Gage & Co., under which title the business was continued until its removal from Wenham about 1880. This company carried on a large business, gathering its ice from several other localities as well as from Wenham Lake. It is said that from 1860 to 1880 it harvested from Wenham Lake alone an annual average of thirty thousand tons.



When the business was first begun, the ice was conveyed on sleds from where it was cut to the houses, and then hoisted into the buildings by horse power. A few years later, long inclines of very gradual ascent were constructed from the water to the buildings, up which the ice was drawn by horses, a large number being thus employed. About 1866, steam power was introduced, and extensive repairs were made on the buildings, some of them being

enlarged and practically rebuilt. In the picture the buildings are shown as they were at this time, the steam elevator being at the extreme left.

For many years the works at this place were under the charge of Mr. John I. Durgin, who had at times as many as three hundred men in his employ.

After the burning of the buildings in 1873, the business was continued somewhat less vigorously for several years, the ice being stored in temporary stacks. About 1880 the Gage Company discontinued its plant at this place. The ice cutting business, however, is still carried on by several other companies at other parts of the lake.

APPENDIX.

Note A.

The exact date of the first sermon in Wenham has never been fully determined, except that it must have been between 1636 and 1641, while Hugh Peters was pastor of the Salem church.

In regard to the early settlement of Wenham, Felt, in his "Annals of Salem" states that "there are no sufficient data to show precisely when this place began to be inhabited." There is a tradition, however, that the first settlers were Austin Killam, Richard Goldsmith, and one of the Fisk brothers, and that they came about the year 1635. During the next few years grants of land in this vicinity were quite numerous, and the population had increased to such an extent that in 1643 it was incorporated as a separate town.

Note B.

In relation to the site of Peters' Hill, the general consensus of opinion among those of the older citizens who have recollections concerning the locality, is that it occupied the ground immediately in the rear of the memorial stone, covering approximately one third of an acre, upon which, after its demolition, the first four ice-houses as shown in the picture, were erected, the eastern wall of the nearest building being but a few feet distant from the stone; that the hillside next to the water was quite steep, and that the height

was such that a person standing on the summit could view the landscape over the ridgepole of the buildings previously erected on the western side.

Note C.

It has been generally believed that this place received the name "Enon" previous to the sermon by Peters, though no documentary evidence in proof of this has been discovered.

Rev. Will C. Wood, a former pastor of the Wenham Congregational Church, in a sermon on Hugh Peters delivered in 1873, raised the question whether the name Enon, as applied to this place, "did not have its origin in the fruitful and original mind of Peters," "Peters" he says "was not a mind to follow another. There would have been far less originality in taking his text if some one before him had already named the place from its waters and its proximity to Salem. He certainly seems to have taken the text originally, and therefore we may fairly conclude he was original in its application. Having then no previous record, we cannot but think that Enon was suggested by Peters himself.

The fact that the earliest mention of the name on the Salem Town Records is in 1642, more than a year after Peters had returned to England, and that all previous grants of land in this vicinity were described as being at or near the great pond, would seem to give some degree of plausibility to this view.

Note D.

The present meeting house of the Congregational Church was built in 1843, and dedicated December 20, of that year, Rev. Daniel Mansfield, the pastor, preaching the sermon on that occasion. This sermon was afterwards printed. Mr. Mansfield also published two very valuable historical sermons which he delivered in October, 1844, on the two hundredth anniversary of the organization of the church.

The old meeting house in which the people of Wenham had worshipped for almost a century, stood a short distance south of the present edifice, on the eastern end of what is now known as "The Park." The last service in the old building was held October 15, 1843. The farewell sermon, which unfortunately has not been preserved, was preached by Mr. Mansfield, and the following hymn,

presumably written for the occasion by some unknown author, was sung.

"Arise ye people of the Lord,
Arise, for this is not your rest,
Depart, obey your Master's word,
And seek the mansions of the blest.

This house of prayer so early reared
By those who bowed and worshipped God,
To them and us has been endeared
As oft its sacred courts we've trod.

Here holy men have preached and prayed,
Here rich instruction hath been given,
Here sovereign grace hath been displayed,
And precious souls been trained for heaven.

Here oft has age with snowy hair
And strength and beauty urged their plea,
Here children too, have raised their prayer,
Their thanks and praises, Lord, to Thee.

But now the last sad hour has come,
And we no longer here may dwell,
These walls, these seats, this hallowed dome,
We bid them all Farewell, Farewell."

A few weeks later, in November of that year, the old building, having been sold to the Ice Company, was removed to the lake to be used thenceforth as an ice house.

Note E.

On the building nearest the highway there was a belfry containing a bell which was rung to indicate the hours for beginning and leaving off work. After a few years its use was discontinued, and the bell removed. It was still there, however, in 1847, when it was tolled for the funeral of Rev. Daniel Mansfield, who died April 8th and was buried April 12th of that year. Mr. Mansfield was highly esteemed not only by his own church and town, but by all the churches and clergy in the vicinity, as was evinced by the large number present at the funeral service, filling the church to its full capacity. The sermon on this occasion was by Rev. Brown

Emerson, D. D., of Salem, from the text, Rev. 14: 13. At the conclusion of the service the people passed in front of the pulpit, and took a last look at the face of their beloved pastor whose voice of instruction, admonition and prayer they would hear no more.

Six clergymen acted as pall-bearers, and as the long procession, escorted by a large number of the young men of the village wearing crape on their left arms, slowly wended its way to the old burying ground, the bell at the lake, on the site of Peters' Hill mingled its tones with those which mournfully tolled from the church tower in the village, while the sacred remains were reverently laid to rest on the hill-side, overlooking the same beautiful landscape which Hugh Peters had viewed so many years before.

Note F.

There are three of these ancient mile-stones on the main highway between the Beverly and Hamilton lines, each of them bearing the same date, 1710. These stones have attracted much attention from strangers passing through the town, especially the one near the entrance to the old burying ground, on which, in addition to the usual distance directions, is inscribed in the quaint orthography of the olden time, a verse of scripture appropriate to its situation, Job 30: 23, "I know thou wilt bring me to death and to the house appointed for all living."

About forty years ago, the inscriptions, which in the course of time had become nearly illegible, were at the instance of a descendant of one of the early inhabitants of the town, recut, following carefully the original cutting, and during the present year they have been made still more legible by painting the letters and figures.

By what authority these stones were placed here we have no definite knowledge, and this note is inserted in the hope that some person who may chance to read it may be able to throw some light upon the subject.

The illustrations in this pamphlet are from photographs by Benjamin H. Conant. The picture of Hugh Peters appeared in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register for January, 1851, and the ice houses was copied from a picture in possession of Mr. Horace E. Durgin.

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